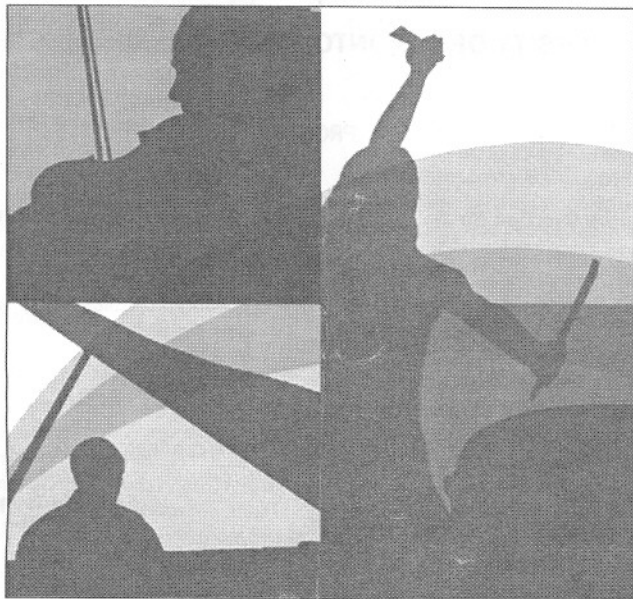


2008--22

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF MUSIC



2007-2008 SEASON

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WHERE GREAT MINDS MEET GREAT MUSIC

82-3000
Saturday, February 2, 2008
7:30 pm. MacMillan Theatre

University of Toronto Faculty of Music
presents

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PROGRAM

12
Leonore Overture No. 3

Ludwig van Beethoven

Oliver Balaburski, graduate student conductor

Concerto for Strings in D

Igor Stravinsky

Vivace

Arioso: Andantino

Rondo: Allegro

Keith Reid, graduate student conductor

16
Violin Concerto No. 2

George Tsontakis

Surges (Among Stars)

Giochi ("Games")

Cavatina (Heart)

Just Go (Fast)

Erika Raum, violin
Raffi Armenian, conductor

- INTERMISSION -

45
Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68

Johannes Brahms

Un poco sostenuto - Allegro

Andante sostenuto

Un poco allegretto e grazioso

Adagio - Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

Raffi Armenian, conductor

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Program Notes

Leonore Overture No. 3, Op. 72

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Beethoven's only opera *Fidelio* (originally entitled *Leonore*) is about a heroic woman (Leonore) who, disguised as a boy (Fidelio), rescues her husband, a political prisoner, from execution. After the failure of its premiere in 1805, Beethoven revised the opera twice more, and in the course of these alterations composed four different overtures. The overtures appeared in this order: *Leonore* No. 2 (for the initial production); *Leonore* No. 3 for the altered production the following year; *Leonore* No. 1, Op. 138, for an unrealized production in 1807; and, finally, the *Fidelio* overture proper for the definitive version of 1814. This last overture, in E major, is the tersest and lightest in tone, and thus the most effective as a prelude to the opera's opening semi-comic moments. *Leonore* No. 3, on the other hand, although today considered one of the greatest—and grandest—concert overtures ever written, is simply too weighty in this theatrical context. "The gigantic tone-poem," wrote the critic Donald Tovey, "totally eclipsed the quiet opening scenes." Although the second production of *Leonore* was a dismal failure like the first, from its wreckage Beethoven salvaged a powerful independent instrumental work. Inspired by the heroic climax of the last act, the *Leonore* Overture No. 3 includes in its development section the opera's famous off-stage trumpet flourish, the call of the watchman on the tower warning the jailor Pizarro that the Minister has arrived to investigate his cruel treatment and unlawful detention of prisoners. The arrival of the Minister also means that Pizarro will have to abandon his plans to execute Leonore's husband, Florestan. In the opera, Pizarro is arrested, the prisoners are set free, Florestan and Leonore are reunited, and the brave woman who saved her husband is praised. The overture, with its buoyant themes and driving rhythms in the heroic key of C major, convincingly celebrates the triumph of justice over tyranny.

Concerto in D for String Orchestra

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

Stravinsky's first commission after becoming a U.S. citizen in 1945 was, ironically, from Europe: a work to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Basel Chamber Orchestra. In 1946, while maintaining a hectic conducting and recording schedule that led him across the U.S. and even to Havana, Stravinsky composed his first piece as an American: the Concerto in D for String Orchestra (it was premiered in Switzerland in January 1947, conducted by Peter Sacher).

A late neo-classical work, this lightweight yet vibrant piece is cast in three movements. The first is a rhythmically obstinate *Vivace* that dwells on the repetition of an insistent F-sharp. Giddiness is interspersed with slower passages that seem to lethargically lurch forward, as if intoxicated. The second movement, an *Arioso* marked *Andantino*, features a sensuous melody supported by rich bass. Because the tune is frequently interrupted, however, its Prokofievian lyricism and sincerity is put into question—could it be a parody of a balletic waltz? The concluding Rondo (*Allegro*) opens with a rapid pulse on a repeated note that drives the frenetic finale to a galloping close. Unifying the piece harmonically is an obsession with the grating discord of the semitone that involves a different note from the D-major triad (D, F-sharp, A) in each movement: F-sharp/F-natural (first movement); A/B-flat (second); and, D/C-sharp (third).

Although conceived as a concert work, Stravinsky's Concerto in D became well-known thanks to Jerome Robbins's ballet *The Cage* produced by New York City Ballet in 1951. Robbins heard in this piece not fluff but something "terribly driven and compelled". Recalling the gruesome behaviour (from a human point of view) of the praying mantis, Robbins's dance depicts a female of the insect species who, after flirting with a male, abruptly castrates and kills him. Two other ballets were inspired by the same score and produced in Germany in the 1950s—both are bug-free.

Violin Concerto No. 2

GEORGE TSONTAKIS

Premiered: 19th, 20th April, 2003. Steven Copes, Violin, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Miguel Harth-Bedoya.

My first concerto was scored for a large orchestra where, in most instances, the forces provide for sonic blocks of granite alternately supporting and challenging the soloist's message and sound. In No. 1, the violin soloist is set apart as kind of a thoughtful anti-hero.

The *Violin Concerto No. 2*, written for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and its dynamic concertmaster, Steven Copes, is another story altogether. In this work, the soloist is a member — albeit the most important, center-stage and influential member — of an intricate musical tapestry formed by joining colorful, distinctly soloistic and individual instrumental partners. The concept of “orchestral” is diminished in deference to the concept of “chamber.”

I wanted to harness and project the kaleidoscopic sparkle of this “ensemble of soloists” without compromising the violin soloist's position of prominence. While designed to create a cohesive architectural whole, there is less emphasis on a dramatic narrative-curve and more on just how colorful and creatively dramatic music can be. At the same time, there would be little doubt that, in its own specific way, this work is truly a violin concerto. — *George Tsontakis*

George Tsontakis has been for some years one of the leading figures of the “new romanticism.” He studied with Roger Sessions at Juilliard, then continued studies in Italy. He returned in 1981, when he was thirty, and almost immediately making his mark with a series of pieces that have attracted attention and won many awards. His String Quartet No. 4, subtitled “Beneath Thy Tenderness of Heart,” won the first prize in the Friedman Kennedy Center competition in 1989. He has been a composer-in-residence at the Aspen Music Festival since 1976 and was named director of the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble in 1991.

In 2005, he won the Grawemeyer Award, widely recognized as the most prestigious composition prize internationally, for his Violin Concerto No. 2. Since then he has composed a Naumburg-commissioned song cycle for soprano Sari Gruber and tonight's

work, an homage to the music and culture of France. Recently he has won the world's richest prize for a composer, the Charles Ives Living, given by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The three-year term of the Ives Living, during which the winner is required to devote himself entirely to composition, will span 2007 to 2010.

Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Beethoven wrote his First Symphony at the age of 30 and within 13 years had composed all but his last, the Ninth. Brahms was set to match this pace when, not yet 30, he drafted the first movement of his First Symphony. But, unsatisfied, he delayed the work's completion until 1876, when he was 43. The work's long gestation owes much to Brahms's acute sense of self-criticism (he regularly burned his manuscripts). But he also knew his work would inevitably be compared to that of the symphony's indisputable king—Beethoven. “You don't know what it is like always to hear that giant marching along behind me,” he lamented in a letter to the conductor Hermann Levi.

Brahms's apprehension, however, seems exaggerated. For, by the time he completed his First Symphony, he had already accumulated a great deal of experience handling not only symphonic form but also orchestral colour: the First Piano Concerto; an orchestral version of the Haydn variations; two early serenades that, despite their stylistic lightness, are symphonic in scope; and several vocal works with substantial orchestral accompaniment including the German Requiem. The critic Donald Tovey observed that there was therefore “at least as much experience of orchestral writing behind Brahms's first symphony as there was behind Beethoven's third”.

Brahms's symphonic starting point is Beethoven. His orchestration is, however, considerably darker. It emphasizes the Rembrandtesque dark browns of the more sombre instruments like the viola and favours the doubling of thirds of chords in low registers. As in Beethoven, rhythm is a driving force, particularly by means of syncopation and Brahms's favourite device, the *hemiola*, the subtle shifting from 3/4 to 6/8 metres that produces a fluid, rocking effect. An avid student of counterpoint from the

Renaissance through Bach to contemporary practice, Brahms's contrapuntal skill is unequalled in the 19th-century. But it is perhaps his ingenuous phrase construction which he is most admired. Arnold Schoenberg, for instance, who hailed Brahms as a "progressive", described his method of extending phrases as "developing variation", a process whereby a theme is built up from small motivic cells, both melodic and rhythmic, then continually modified—a technique immediately apparent in the first movement of Brahms's First Symphony.

The symphony begins with an imposing slow introduction marked *Un poco sostenuto*. Above a thundering C-pedal in the timpani, contrabassoon and double basses, rises a tortured, chromatic line in the violins. This is music of controlled vigour: rich, robust, serious. Tovey conjures up the image of a "gigantic procession of cloudy figures, destined to take shape as the themes of the first movement". The ensuing sonata-form *Allegro* is a storm of relentless rhythmic energy propelled forward by Brahms's vital counterpoint. The storm only subsides in the coda where the distant thunder of the introduction echoes once more. "A mighty sigh," writes Tovey, "tells that the tragedy is finished".

The two inner movements, both in ternary form, offer a welcome reprieve. In the lyrical *Andante sostenuto* (in E major), a memorable violin solo is joined by the oboe, then reprised in counterpoint with the horn. The third movement, *Un poco Allegretto e grazioso* (in A-flat major—note the pattern of rising major thirds), is gentle, relaxed, even carefree in spirit despite some turbulent moments. Beethoven substituted the boisterous scherzo for the dignified Classical minuet; Brahms, in a compromise of sorts, in all but his last symphony, replaced Beethoven's scherzo with a more subdued

intermezzo.

The emotional holiday comes to an end at the start of the finale. Its slow introduction, initially marked *Adagio*, recalls the ominous atmosphere of the symphony's opening. But this time the gloom is short-lived: at the *Più andante* the sky begins to clear up. Now in C major (traditionally the key of heroism and triumph), we hear the famous horn solo, answered by a high flute; then a trombone chorale; and again the horn solo, now joined by other jubilant exclamations from the orchestra. The *Allegro non troppo, ma con brio* finally ushers in clear blue sky with a rustic, good-natured tune in the violins. Much has been said about the unmistakable similarity between this theme and the "Ode to Joy" from the finale of Beethoven's Ninth. To this, an irritated Brahms, in his characteristic bluntness, is reported to have said "any jackass could see that". Perhaps it is therefore best to think of the tune as a friendly allusion to a famous counterpart and nothing more. At any rate, the earthy tune is only part of the story; at the movement's climax, the trombone chorale returns, this time belted out by the whole orchestra.

Tovey speaks of the first movement's "immense tragedy" that leads to the "triumph" of the finale. In his view, the tragedy is already over in the first movement. "It is the special privilege of the classical forms of instrumental music that they can thus bring within the compass of a single work something more than a tragedy," he explains. "A work that ends in triumph, not because the world has been stopped in its course in order to spare our feelings, but because our feelings are carried through and beyond the tragedy to something higher."

Notes (except Tsontakis) © 2008 by Robert Rival, doctoral candidate in composition in the Faculty of Music. www.robertrival.com

Biographies

Known for her "engaging sensitivity and a gorgeously full tone," [THE STRAD], Canadian violinist **Erika Raum** continues developing a following here in her native country and internationally. Playing professionally since the age of twelve, Ms. Raum quickly rose through the ranks by taking first place at the 1992 Joseph Szigeti International Violin Competition in Budapest as well as the award for best interpretation of a Mozart concerto.

She has returned on many occasions to perform in Hungary, Portugal, Sweden, Austria, Germany, England, Italy and France. She has appeared as guest artist with such orchestras as the Budapest Radio Orchestra, the Szombathely Symphony Orchestra, the Austro-Hungarian Orchestra, and the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra.

A distinguished musician abroad, Erika also performs frequently throughout her

homeland with orchestral appearances in cities such as Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver, Ottawa, Victoria, Halifax, and Edmonton. Both a recitalist and chamber musician, some of her recent international highlights include the Festival Pablo Casals in Prades France, Beethoven Festival in Warsaw, the BargeMusic Festival in New York, Seattle Chamber Music Festival and past invitation include the Budapest Spring Festival, Szombathely Festival in Hungary, Carnegie Hall as well as the Caramoor and Prussia Cove festivals. Last summer saw her perform at the Festival Pablo Casals and at the Chamber Festival in Perpignan, France. Her performances are often heard on an array of radio networks like CBC across Canada and the NPR in the USA.

As a recording artist, Erika joined internationally renowned pianist Anton Kuerti in releasing the world premiere recording of Carl Czerny's piano and violin works. Recorded on this country's most active label, Musica Viva of CBC Records, this premiere recording highlights the masterfully composed, powerfully expressive works by the precocious composer during his teen years. Her most recent release for the Arktos label consisted of the Brahms Horn Trio and another recording premiere: Pantheon by the esteemed composer (and mother!) Elizabeth Raum. With pianist Lydia Wong, they will soon record the complete violin and piano works of Krystof Penderecki.

In 1993, Elizabeth Raum wrote her a violin concerto entitled "Faces of Woman." The work was commissioned by the Regina Symphony Orchestra and broadcast nationally by the CBC. Erika's sister, Jessica Raum, produced and directed the award winning documentary "Like Mother, Like Daughter" which recorded the event.

Erika is a graduate of the University of Toronto where she studied with the late Professor Lorand Fenyves and was awarded the prestigious Eaton Scholarship upon her graduation. She is also a recipient of The Canada Council for the Arts - Career Development Grant. Ms. Raum is currently on the faculties of the Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto and the University of Toronto. She continues her presence on the summer faculty of The Banff Centre for the Arts and has been a guest teacher at the Orford Arts Centre this summer.

Maestro **Raffi Armenian** graduated from the piano performance class of Bruno Seidlhofer at the Academy of Music in Vienna, Austria. He further studied at Imperial College, University of London, England, before completing his studies at the Vienna Academy of Music with Hans Swarowsky (orchestral conducting), Rheinhold Schmid (choral conducting) and Alfred Uhl (composition). He also took private voice lessons with Ferdinand Grossmann.

In 1969 Raffi Armenian immigrated to Canada, where he became Artistic Director of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony for 22 years. The Raffi Armenian Theatre in Kitchener, which he helped to design, is considered one of the best performance spaces in North America, both for its acoustics and its design features. In 1974, as Music Director of the Stratford Festival, he founded the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, which achieved international recognition with tours in North and South America, and Europe.

Raffi Armenian has guest conducted all of the major orchestras in Canada, as well as in Belgium, Italy, the United States, and the Jeunesses Musicales World Youth Orchestra. Equally at home on the operatic podium, he has conducted productions in Toronto, Montreal, Detroit, Columbus and Indiana, in a vast repertoire, including Berg's *Wozzeck* for the Canadian Opera Company, Toronto, and Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress*. From 1982 to 1985 he was Artistic Director of the Opera Studio of Opera de Montreal. In 1989, he conducted the final public appearance of the great Canadian tenor Jon Vickers, in a concert performance of Wagner's *Parsifal*. In March 2006, he led the University of Toronto Opera Division in four performances of *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart.

Raffi Armenian's work has received countless honors including the Canadian Grand Prix du Disque for *Serenades*, and an Emmy Award nomination for the TV performance of Menotti's *The Medium* starring Maureen Forrester. Woody Allen used his CD *Music from Berlin* in the 1920s as background music for his film *Shadows and Fog*. He is a recipient of Honorary Doctorates from the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, and the Golden Jubilee Medal of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In 1989 he was invested into the Order of Canada.

Raffi Armenian has long been active as a pedagogue. In 1981 he became a Professor of the Orchestral Conducting Class in addition to conducting the Orchestra at Conservatoire de Musique in Montreal, position he continues to hold. In 1997 he

accepted a two-year post as Visiting Guest Professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, in Graz, Austria, and since September 1999 Mr. Armenian has been Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto.

Orchestra

VIOLIN I

Jane Joon Mee, *concertmaster*
Michelle Lee, *concertmaster*,
Stravinsky
Matthew Chan
Calvin Cheng
Eun A Jo
Madeline Kapp
Joyce Kim
Luri Lee
Khai (Kevin) Nguyen
Takayo Noguchi
Colin Repas
Monica Louise Westerholm

VIOLIN II

James A Kruspe, *principal*
Sarah Davidson-Gurney, *principal*,
Stravinsky
Andreea-Madalina Arbon
Katherine Avery
Maia Broido
Han-Yu (Holly) Cheng
Mohamed-Aly Farag
Iain MacKay
Markus Medri
Jennifer Anne Melvin
Natasha Rollings
Hoi Wing (Eros) Tang
Emma Sabrina
Veronica Vachon-Twenty

VIOLA

John Ng, *principal*
Gene Po-Chun Chen, *principal*,
Stravinsky
Mohammed Abu Ramadan
Mohsin Bhujwalla
Louisa Susan Cornacchia
Megan Gilsenan
Sarah Torrance

CELLO

Veronica Nettles, *principal*
Bryan Holt, *principal*, *Stravinsky*
Andrew Ascenzo
Samuel Bisson
Claire Burrows
Brenton Chan
Steven Po-Tse Chen
Jason Eui-Sung Cho
Cydney Grogan
Christopher Shuenwen Hwang
Kimberly Miyoung Jeong
Mi So Mok
Amber Walton-Amar

DOUBLE BASS

Samantha McLellan, *principal*
Callum Jennings, *principal*,
Stravinsky
Joshua Bell
Michael John Charles
Deirdre Bryant
Jonathan Deshman
Alexander Kotyk
Calvin Marks
Adrian Rigopulos
Ben Whiteley

FLUTE

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Joo Yeon (Julia) Han
Kaili Maimets
Eun Ji Park
Stephanie Pesant

OBOE

Helena Kyungmin Choi
Victoria Hong

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Gabriel Estrin, *bass clarinet*
Alixandra Haywood
David Perry
John Williams

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Devin Wesley, *contrabassoon*
Krista Wodelet

HORN

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Carmich Babiak
Marina Krickler
Anna Millan
Emily Rapson
Curtis Vander-Hyden

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Robert Weymouth

TROMBONE

Nathan Fanning
Nelson Garces
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